(b) No time-frame can be indicated in this regard at this stage. The Government is keen to announce a comprehensive North East Industrial Policy at the earliest.

(c) At this stage it is not feasible to indicate the names of industries which are likely to benefit from the new Policy.

Closure of Cinchona plantation

†2743. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Cinchona plantations in the country are on the verge of closure due to less consumption of this medicinal plant within the country as well as abroad;

(b) the number of cinchona plantations in the country and the details thereof;

(c) the present condition of cinchona plantations of Darjeeling and whether Government have any scheme for revival of cinchona industry; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (d) Cinchona is a medicinal plant as its bark is used in the preparation of Quinine, an anti-malarial medicine. National Medicinal Plants Board, under the Department of AYUSH, has not indentified the cultivation fo Cinchona plant as priority plant for cultivation or plantation under its schemes.

Reportedly there is a Directorate of Cinchona and Other Medicinal Plants under; the Department of Commerce and Industry, Government of West Bengal. As per the information available on the website of Directorate of Cinchona and Other Medicinal Plants it is reported that in 8277 acres of land Cinchona is cultivated.

Decline in Indo-Myanmar border trade

2744. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is fact that the Indo-Myanmar border through Moreh is down from Rs. 57.53 crore in 1997-98 to a dismal Rs. 5.48 crore in 2000-01, and to Rs. 10.65 crore in 2004-05;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the illegal border trade is nine times the legal trade;

(c) if so, whether Government have mady any investigations in this matter; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to conduct trade through mutually agreed system of freely convertible currencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The Indo-Myanmar border trade through Moreh was of the order of Rs. 62.37 crores in 1997-98, Rs. 18.11 crores in 2000-01 and Rs. 11.61 crores in 2004-05.

(b) and (c) Reports have been received about illegal imports and exports through Moreh during the past few years. The anti-smuggling unit of customs is taking steps to check smuggling on the Moreh border and the value of contraband seized after investigations amounted to Rs. 0.41 crores in 1997-98, Rs. 3.44 crores in 2000-01 and Rs. 2.43 crores in 2004-05.

(d) Apart from the border trade facilities available for export and import of specific commodities through designated border trading points, facility for normal trade regime under India-Myanmar bilateral trade is already available through freely convertible currencies.

Doubling of Indo-US bilateral trade

2745. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and the US have agreed to set up initiative to double bilateral trade to $ 50 billion over the next three years;

(b) whether any action plan was discussed by the Commerce Minister with the US trade representative, in June, 2006;

(c) if so, whether the plan includes infrastructure investment programme, that would give India opportunities, incentives and challenges in power, roads, ports and airports;